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DCI Director of Central Intelligence

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Update Memorandum: NIE 94-19

From the Chairman, National Intelligence Council

Iraqi Military Capabilities Through 1999 [redacted]

Key Points

NIE 94-19, published in July 1994, drew conclusions about Iraq's current military capability, force deployment options and timelines, and Coalition warning. In the wake of the October Gulf crisis, those conclusions generally are still valid:

- Iraq retains a number of military options for threatening Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. These range from short-warning border incursions that could cause considerable damage to Kuwait to a full-scale offensive—involving some 13 to 18 divisions with the full mix of support assets, spearheaded by a corps-sized, Republican Guard–led assault force—designed to seize and occupy Kuwait and/or attempt to damage or destroy the Saudi oilfields.

- We continue to assess that, without significant and timely opposition from Western forces, Iraq could overwhelm Kuwait with this corps-sized assault force and extend a smaller force beyond Kuwait to damage Saudi oil facilities as far south as As Saffaniyah. We also continue to believe that Iraq could not extend corps-level operations beyond Kuwait without reconstituting forces and establishing a major logistic support base. The time required to complete those activities would permit Coalition forces

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to establish defenses precluding an Iraqi threat to the major Saudi facilities in the Al Jubayl–Dhahran area. These conclusions are based on our analysis of Iraqi military shortcomings and are sensitive to several premises (see inset on page 2: Reexamining Our Working Premises).

- In addition to the phased operation described above—in which Iraqi forces first seize Kuwait, then attempt a follow-on attack deep into Saudi Arabia—the Military Intelligence Community believes Iraq might conceivably be able to conduct an alternative operation. In this high-risk, low probability, but potentially high-impact scenario, a multidivision Iraqi force would attempt to bypass all local resistance in Kuwait, leaving that to follow-on forces, and continue down the Saudi peninsula to damage oil facilities and ports in the Al Jubayl–Dhahran area. (See page 8 for contrasting assessments of Iraq's capabilities to execute this attack.)

- Iraq's military remains plagued by a host of shortcomings, which would limit its combat effectiveness, particularly against Western forces. Some problems—morale, leadership, maintenance, supply, and transport—have worsened.

- Iraq is not likely to attempt another occupation of Kuwait unless it substantially improves its capabilities, is convinced that only token Western opposition will be mounted, and is no longer preoccupied with maintaining internal security. In the wake of the October crisis, Saddam probably is even more certain of the US capability and will to protect its regional interests.

Saddam's intentions during the October crisis were unclear. Nevertheless, the event demonstrated Baghdad's capability to quickly assemble a force that could have caused considerable damage to Kuwait and could have overwhelmed the country. Moreover, the crisis showed that Saddam retains his penchant for unpredictable, high-risk, confrontational tactics.

Because Saddam has not altered his fundamental goals, Iraq remains an immediate source of concern and a long-term threat to US strategic interests in the Persian Gulf. Baghdad probably will pursue a more cooperative diplomatic policy in the near term in an effort to get relief from UN sanctions. If, during the first half of 1995, this fails to establish a time frame for ending the UN oil embargo, however, most agencies expect Saddam will again resort to confrontational tactics:

- *The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State* contends that it is impossible to predict with confidence whether Saddam will choose confrontation or opt for a period of quiescence and cooperation sufficient to obtain an easing of sanctions by the end of 1995.

The withdrawal of Iraqi Republican Guard forces north of the 32nd parallel, and the US and UK demarches restricting Iraqi force enhancements south of that line, will affect Saddam's consideration of force options for any future operation against Kuwait. We continue to assess that Saddam would want to include more capable Republican Guard forces in any major military operation outside the country.

Figure 1
Major Republican Guard Deployments, 1-11 October 1994

Discussion

In light of Iraqi military actions during the October 1994 Kuwaiti crisis and the changed postcrisis regional security situation, the Intelligence Community has reevaluated key portions of National Intelligence Estimate 94-19, published in July 1994. This Update Memorandum focuses on two key questions:

- What did we learn from the October crisis about Iraq's military capabilities, options, and force preparation timelines?
- How does the postcrisis security situation affect the Iraqi threat to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia?

The October Crisis and Its Aftermath

Insight and Uncertainty. Between 1 and 11 October 1994, Iraq deployed the major combat elements of two Republican Guard armored divisions from various garrison areas near Baghdad and in the north to staging areas opposite the Kuwaiti border (see figure 1). This deployment provided a unique opportunity for US intelligence to track and analyze Iraqi force movements and deployment capabilities. However, because we remain uncertain regarding Iraq's intentions during the crisis, we are cautious about drawing direct parallels between the October movements and the force requirements and preparation timelines for an actual invasion of Kuwait:

- Saddam's intentions during the recent crisis were unclear. He may have been preparing for a full-scale invasion or a limited-objective raid, or he simply may have been trying to provoke a Western response. Some evidence—outloading ammunition depots, canceling field training, and heightened alerts—suggests a deployment for combat. Conversely, the apparent lack of preparation by other critical force elements—particularly air and air defense—suggests that combat was not imminent.
- Since the movement was halted before it was completed, we do not know what, if any, additional elements beyond those already deployed or in transit Iraq intended to move south. Thus, even if these were real invasion preparations, it is difficult to determine "where Iraq was" in the transition to war process.

Key Features of the October Deployment. The crisis did provide an important reference point for updating our analysis of Iraq's military options and capabilities (see table 1).

This Memorandum updates the findings of National Intelligence Estimate 94-19 issued in July 1994. It was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces. It was coordinated with the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director, National Security Agency; the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force; and the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

Reexamining Our Working Premises

NIE 94-19 acknowledged several working premises. One implication of these was that, during any future contingency, Coalition forces would be able to deploy into the Persian Gulf region unimpeded. While that remains the most likely scenario, evidence since July bears mentioning:

- *The NIE assumed Coalition forces deploying to the region would not face any threat from Iran. We remain convinced that Iran and Iraq would not act in collusion and that Iran would not wittingly attack Coalition forces responding solely to an Iraqi threat. However, Tehran's growing perception of US hostility, its nervousness over US deployments during October, and its subsequent military preparations raise the possibility of inadvertent confrontation with Western forces. While Iran could not prevail in an extended military encounter with the West, a confrontation could slow the pace of a Western force buildup and complicate force planning and deployment decisions.*

[redacted]

If some combination of Iranian opposition and problems with [redacted] *then Iraq could conceivably gain the time necessary to prepare and execute a follow-on offensive deep into Saudi Arabia before the Coalition could respond. In that scenario, critical Saudi oil, water, and port facilities would be at risk.* [redacted]

Several aspects of the October deployment are most important in this regard:

- One division, the Hammurabi, was moved exclusively by heavy equipment transports (HETs); the other, Al Nida, used both rail and HETs. Overall, however, HET use was much greater than we anticipated.

- Some units began to move on 1 October; others waited until perhaps 7 October. When Iraq announced the withdrawal of its forces on 10 October, 21 of the 24 maneuver battalions and 5 of 8 artillery battalions assigned to the two divisions had arrived in the southern border area. The remaining maneuver and fire support elements of both divisions, including air defense assets, were either awaiting transport or in transit south. Had the buildup continued, we assess that these elements, and some corps fire-support assets, could have arrived in southern Iraq late on 12 October.

Table 1
Assessment of Iraqi Deployment to Kuwaiti Border

	Hammurabi Armored Division (subordinate brigades)				Al Nida Armored Division (subordinate brigades)			
	8th	15th	17th	Artillery	41st	42nd	43rd	Artillery
Transport mode[a]	HET	HET	HET	HET	Rail	HET	Rail	NA
Began movement	1 Oct	3 Oct	4 Oct	6 Oct	7 Oct	1-3 Oct	5-6 Oct	NA
All elements departed	9 Oct	6 Oct	7 Oct	7 Oct	Did not	6 Oct	9-10 Oct	NA
Battalions in place (11 October)[b]	4 of 4	4 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4	4 of 4 (–)	4 of 4	2 of 4 (–)	2 of 4

Note: In addition to the deployments depicted in the table, Iraq also deployed 2 of 8 corps artillery battalions, 2 of 3 corps multiple rocket launcher battalions, and 1 of 4 corps SA-8 Air Defense battalions. Iraq apparently did not establish divisional and corps supply depots, nor did it deploy divisional engineer, maintenance, and medical units.

[a] Al Nida maneuver battalions were transported from garrison to railhead by HETs.
[b] Remaining battalions were either awaiting transport at railhead or in transit.

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- Iraq could have initiated combat operations shortly thereafter, assuming it was willing to commit these two divisions with less-than-full support. For instance, we have no evidence that division or corps supply depots were established with the deployed forces or that key divisional and nondivisional assets expected to be employed in a major offensive were present, including divisional engineer, maintenance, and medical units, and the full complement of corps artillery, surface-to-air missiles, and rocket systems. At a minimum, it would have taken Iraq another three days to deploy these assets.

- There is evidence that Iraq intended to move additional Republican Guard divisions south, but there is no evidence that these units actually deployed to southern Iraq.

- Iraq probably was surprised by the swift military response and diplomatic actions taken by the United States, the UN, and other members of the Coalition. Saddam now is probably even more certain of the US capability and will to protect its regional interests.

Saddam's Near-Term Strategy. [1] Despite the outcome of the October crisis and Iraq's recent recognition of Kuwaiti sovereignty, Saddam has not altered his fundamental goals—restore Iraq's territorial integrity, retake Kuwait, and dominate the Persian Gulf. To these ends, Saddam's most important near-term objective remains obtaining relief from UN sanctions. In the wake of the crisis, his immediate strategy for achieving this goal will be to cooperate with the UN. If, during the first half of 1995, this fails to establish a time frame for ending the

[1] See Update Memorandum NIE 93-42 (Secret November 1994, *Prospects for Iraq: Saddam and Beyond* for a complete discussion of Saddam's political prospects and Iraq's economic and internal security situation.

UN oil embargo, however, most agencies expect Saddam will again resort to confrontational tactics:

- *The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State* contends that it is impossible to predict with confidence whether Saddam will choose confrontation or opt for a period of quiescence and cooperation sufficient to obtain an easing of sanctions by the end of 1995.

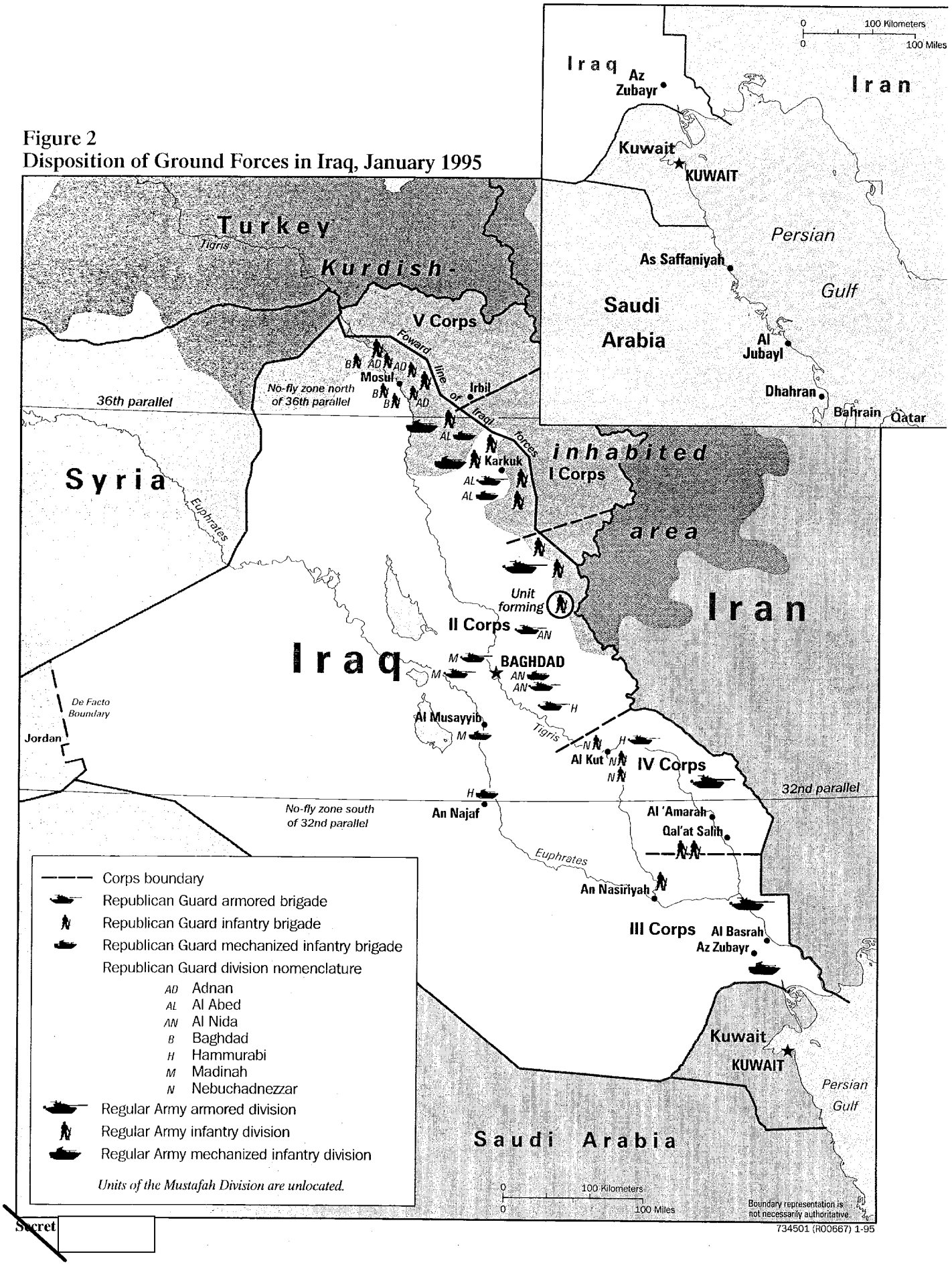
Saddam retains a number of options for pursuing confrontation ranging from increased harassment of the Kurds to renewed threats to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. His actions in October reflect a willingness to conduct an unpredictable and high-risk strategy that exposed to possible attack an important element of his military.

Iraqi Force Dispositions and Restrictions. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 949 enjoined Iraq to withdraw the units that deployed during October opposite Kuwait. Perhaps out of fear of a Coalition strike, Iraq went beyond the stipulations of UNSCR 949 and moved all Republican Guard units north of the 32nd parallel—even the division-sized element that had been garrisoned at Qal'at Salih south of 32 degrees before October (see figure 2).

Text of the US Demarche Delivered to Iraq on 20 October 1994

- *Iraq must immediately complete the withdrawal to north of the 32nd parallel all military units deployed below the 32nd parallel after September 20, 1994.*
- *In accordance with UNSCR 949, Iraq may not again utilize its military or any other forces in a hostile or provocative manner to threaten either its neighbors or United Nations operations in Iraq.*
- *In the future, Iraq may not enhance its military capabilities below the 32nd parallel.*
- *Iraq must cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Commission.*
- *Any violation of these requirements would have serious consequences, and my government is prepared to respond appropriately and decisively.*
- *The Coalition will not remain indifferent should Iraq use military force to suppress the Iraqi people in the north or south of Iraq.*

Figure 2
Disposition of Ground Forces in Iraq, January 1995



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The new Iraqi force disposition, and the restrictions on Iraqi force enhancements south of 32 degrees, affect the regional security situation in several ways:

- The concentration of more Republican Guard forces in central Iraq increases the demands on road and rail transport assets in a major deployment. This could diminish Iraq's already limited capability to rapidly redeploy large numbers of units.

- If Coalition air attacks were authorized against Iraqi forces once they crossed south of the 32nd parallel, Baghdad's force generation capabilities would be seriously degraded, providing Coalition forces additional time to establish effective defenses.

- With all Republican Guard units now garrisoned north of 32 degrees, and the demarches in effect, Saddam may be more likely to consider attack options against Kuwait, which involve only regular Army units already garrisoned south of the 32nd parallel. These are discussed on page 11.

- Saddam is likely to test the 32-degree restriction—and Western resolve, vigilance, and cohesion—with small or temporary deployments south of 32 degrees. Such deployments—depending on their size and length—could provoke a confrontation with Western forces.

Reassessing Iraqi Military Capabilities and Options

In July, we made a number of judgments about Iraq's current military capability, its options for threatening Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and Coalition warning. In the wake of the October crisis, those judgments generally are still valid.

Capability Still Limited . . . Iraq's military remains plagued by a host of materiel, technical, and operational shortcomings which would limit its warfighting effectiveness in operations beyond Iraq's borders or against Western forces. Evidence since July indicates that these shortcomings—particularly with respect to morale, leadership, maintenance, supply, and transport—have worsened:

- Low salaries and dismal living conditions for enlisted personnel have driven thousands of regular Army soldiers to desert. Problems that have ravaged the regular Army for several years may now be affecting the Republican Guard. Supply shortages, as evidenced during the October crisis, continue to plague III Corps.

- The October deployments used scarce resources and further degraded Iraq's combat and combat-support vehicle fleet. With UN sanctions still in effect, it will be difficult for Iraq to obtain the specialty parts required to restore even precrisis capability.

- Although there is no evidence to date that the rail system suffered any degradation during the deployment and withdrawal, the crisis did nothing to improve Iraq's already dire transportation situation. In July we assessed that only 400 of more than 1,000 HETs were operational because of shortages of spare parts, particularly tires. During the crisis, Iraq used at least 270 HETs. Given the number of broken down HETs seen during and after the crisis, there are certainly fewer in operation now.

. . . But Options Remain. Despite these shortcomings, Baghdad retains a number of military options for threatening Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. These range from short-warning border incursions against northern Kuwait to a full-scale offensive—involving some 13 to 18 divisions with the full mix of support assets, spearheaded by a corps-sized, Republican Guard–led assault force—designed to seize and occupy Kuwait and/or attempt to damage or destroy the Saudi oilfields.

Barring significant and timely opposition from Western forces, Iraq could overwhelm Kuwait with this corps-sized assault force and extend a smaller force beyond Kuwait to damage Saudi oil facilities as far south as As Saffaniyah. Iraq could not, however, quickly extend corps-level operations deep enough into Saudi Arabia to threaten the major Saudi oil facilities at Al Jubayl and Dhahran before Coalition forces could establish defenses in the area.

In addition to the phased operation described above—in which Iraqi forces first seize Kuwait, then attempt a follow-on attack deep into Saudi Arabia—the Military Intelligence Community believes Iraq might conceivably be able to conduct an alternative operation. In this high-risk, low probability, but potentially high-impact scenario, a multidivision Iraqi force would attempt to bypass all local resistance in Kuwait, leaving that to follow-on forces, and continue down the Saudi peninsula to damage oil facilities and ports in the Al Jubayl–Dhahran area. The inset on pages 8 and 9 presents contrasting assessments of Iraq's capability to execute this attack.

Representative Threat Scenarios, Capabilities, and Warning

Limited Threat Options. As articulated in the NIE, Iraq's III Corps, with armored forces within 30 kilometers of the border, remains capable of conducting a number of limited operations on short notice against Kuwait. These include moving forces into the Demilitarized Zone; conducting punitive raids to damage, destroy, or seize property; and executing a limited objective invasion to seize and hold

selected areas or facilities adjacent to the border. Iraq could also use a Republican Guard unit in a limited threat scenario. In our judgment, however, Saddam would be very hesitant to risk any Republican Guard armored divisions in this manner.

Under the right conditions—surprise, speed, and short duration—a limited objective attack could inflict considerable damage on selected oil and water facilities in northern Kuwait. The Iraqi military would have a difficult time taking and holding Kuwaiti territory, however, in the face of concerted Western opposition. Moreover, given their experience during the Gulf war, Iraqi commanders probably would anticipate substantial losses from Coalition air strikes during any prolonged cross-border operation inside Kuwait.

Can Iraq Project Significant Forces Deep Into Saudi Arabia?

The Military Intelligence Community believes that Iraq has at least some chance of quickly mounting a multidivision attack that could successfully penetrate deep enough into Saudi Arabia to damage oil facilities in the Al Jubayal–Dhahran area. This attack, spearheaded by several Republican Guard divisions, would attempt to bypass all resistance and would continue down the Saudi peninsula to damage oil facilities and ports. The force would attempt not to seize and hold terrain, but rather to strike a political and economic blow against the GCC and the West. For Saddam, a successful operation would destroy a substantial portion of the oil facilities, return some Republican Guard forces intact, and wrest concessions from the GCC that would prevent a Coalition counterattack.

Given Saddam's record of unpredictability, no agency is willing to completely rule out his attempting another high-risk military confrontation. On the other hand, no agency disputes the evidence presented in the NIE and in this Update Memorandum regarding Iraq's severe military shortfalls. ***The difference between agencies centers on how operationally limiting those shortfalls would be in the specific scenario described above.*** *For the sake of clarity, that argument is summarized on the next page.*

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Iraq Can't Do It *(This view is held by the National Intelligence Council; the Central Intelligence Agency; and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.)*	***Why It Can't Be Ruled Out*** *(This view is held by the members of the Military Intelligence Community.)*
Overall	
Iraqi forces lack the training, combat experience, ability to integrate combined-arms elements, and the mobile C³I, logistics, and air defense capability to execute and support high-speed offensive operations at great distances from Iraq. They have neither practiced for, nor ever demonstrated the capability to, execute this type of operation.	*Iraq's rapid and orderly deployment of two Republican Guard armored divisions during October and the December Madinah division exercise demonstrate that the Republican Guard is able to cope with its maintenance and logistic problems and still undertake sizable operations. Iraqi tanks and armored vehicles are capable of attacking into Saudi Arabia carrying only basic loads. A sudden attack would provide little warning and would allow Iraqi forces to penetrate through Kuwait before significant Coalition resistance could develop.*
Transport, maintenance, and supply	
Iraqi transport assets are insufficient to quickly move a multidivision force beyond Kuwait. The bulk of the force would have to move the 400 to 500 km envisioned in this scenario under their own power. Given the poor state of Iraqi equipment, and Iraq's lack of mobile maintenance capability, vehicle breakdown rates would be high. Iraq's inability to resupply forces would become a major constraint in operations lasting longer than three days.	*A multidivision force would move largely under its own power. Republican Guard equipment is better maintained than regular Army equipment. Some elements of the attacking force could be shuttled on a limited number of HETs. The October crisis demonstrated that Iraq can efficiently move forces by cycling a relatively small number of HETs. A speedy operation facing light resistance could reach its objectives with basic loads. Attacking forces would take advantage of captured supplies and equipment.*
Morale, leadership, and control	
Chronic morale problems have undermined Iraqi military effectiveness and would become particularly apparent in a high-risk/high-demand operation. Iraq's officer corps is neither trained for, nor experienced in, high-speed, offensive, maneuver warfare. Iraqi forces lack the command flexibility, initiative, and mobile C³I support for this type of operation.	*Republican Guard units owe their special status and treatment to Saddam and would follow orders even at extreme risk. Republican Guard morale is much better than morale in the regular Army. Given expected light resistance, and moving toward fixed objectives at known locations, the operation would not require extraordinary command and control. A fast successful operation would enhance morale and go far to assuage the embarrassment of the Gulf war defeat. Iraq has an experienced, professional officer corps,*
Air defense	
Iraqi units would be under attack from Coalition air forces from the time they crossed the Iraq-Kuwait border, if not well before. Losses would be devastating, both in terms of numbers and, perhaps more importantly, psychologically. Given the shortfalls outlined above, the attack would likely grind to a halt well short of its objectives.	*A campaign by Coalition air forces normally present in the Gulf probably would not be sufficient by itself to stop the momentum of an operation involving hundreds of armored vehicles.*

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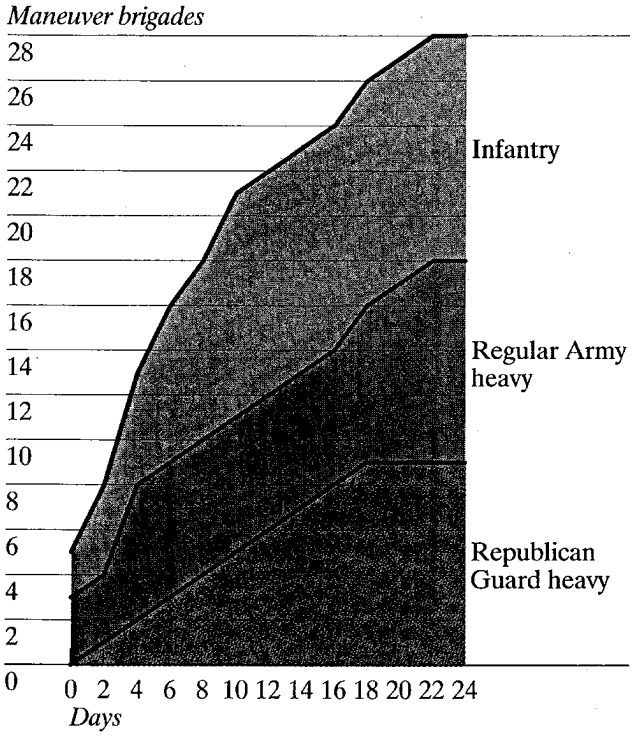
Figure 3
Representative Iraqi Force Generation Capacity



Note: This chart provides a representative depiction of Iraq's capability to move maneuver brigades from their current garrison locations to staging areas opposite the Kuwaiti border. This analysis assumes Republican Guard heavy forces have priority and that divisional and corps support assets are also moved.

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A Major Offensive. In July we concluded that Iraq would be unlikely to attempt another full-scale invasion of Kuwait unless it had substantially improved its sustainment capabilities, was convinced that only token Western opposition would be mounted, and was no longer preoccupied with maintaining internal security. Events since July—particularly the rapid US response during the October crisis, the prospects for an increased US military presence in the region at least over the near term, the US demarches restricting Iraqi force enhancements south of the 32nd parallel, and Iraq's enduring military shortcomings—reinforce that judgment.

Nevertheless, should Saddam order another full invasion of Kuwait, Iraq retains a number of force package options. Generally, these trade preparation time and Coalition warning for enhanced capabilities (see figure 3). In the NIE, we focused on a single representative invasion scenario that emphasized a more deliberate

buildup of forces. This type scenario is consistent with Iraq's record and, in our judgment, remains Saddam's preferred option. However, in the wake of the new restrictions on Iraqi force deployments, and depending on Saddam's perception of Coalition force generation capabilities, other more rapid build-up options might be considered. We have included an analysis of those scenarios here.

Regular Army Only. In July, we concluded that, because regular Army units were much less reliable and capable than the Republican Guard, Saddam probably would want to use the Republican Guard in any major operation outside the country. In our judgment, that preference still applies; however, in the wake of the crisis, Saddam faces a dilemma.

With the US demarches in effect, and all Republican Guard units garrisoned north of 32 degrees, any significant movement of Republican Guard units south of that line could provoke a Western military response. We recognize that Saddam may now feel compelled to limit his initial attack force to those regular Army units already garrisoned south of the 32nd parallel.

Improvements in the equipment base and operational tempo of regular Army units garrisoned in the south would be a clear indication that these options were becoming more viable.

Iraq could organize a corps-sized offensive, using only III and IV Corps units, in about five to seven days, assuming all operational HETs were employed. This force could overrun Kuwait, if opposed only by Kuwaiti and other GCC forces. These regular Army units could then undertake a division-sized raid into northern Saudi Arabia.

In our judgment, however, an offensive by regular Army units alone is unlikely, unless those forces are improved significantly. Current problems in supply, equipment condition, morale, and personnel strength would severely limit Iraqi combat effectiveness and make it difficult for Iraq to hold its gains. Intervention by Coalition forces presently in-theater would tip the balance against Iraq. Based on historical precedent, a regular Army offensive would grind to a halt if serious opposition were encountered.

Uncertainties Remain Regarding Iraq's October Deployment

As stated earlier, our analysis of the October deployments concludes that the major combat elements of both divisions involved in the movement would have been in position by late on 12 October, a 12-day preparation timeline. However, we do not know if that timeline reflects the best that Iraq could accomplish. Questions remain regarding how well and how far in advance the movement was planned, how well it was executed, whether Iraq used all its transport capacity, and why two of the six maneuver brigades involved in the deployment did not begin moving until 6-7 October.

We do not know if this delay reflected a limitation in Iraq's deployment capability, a planned sequencing of movements, indecision on the part of Saddam, or resistance on the part of subordinate commanders to execute deployment orders. Transport assets were not a factor, since these brigades used the relatively unburdened rail system. The Republican Guard planners may have feared a bottleneck at Az Zubayr in the south and staggered force deployments. As an operational security measure, the brigades may not have been notified about their deployment until the last moment. Alternatively, the brigades may have been notified earlier than 6 October, but needed the interim period to prepare for deployment. Finally, the regime may not have decided to move these specific units until after the deployment began.

At any rate, if this delay were not capability related, then Iraq theoretically could have completed the two division deployment in less than a week.

The October Scenario. Repeating the events of October 1994, Iraq could organize an invasion force centered on two Republican Guard armored divisions from the Baghdad area. The timeline for preparing this offensive is uncertain (see inset). Assuming the October deployment did not reflect Iraq's full capacity and judging from the speed shown in the rail movement south and during the withdrawal, Iraq could theoretically move the maneuver elements of two Republican Guard armored divisions, minus most divisional and corps support elements, to the Kuwait border in less than a week.[5] HETs could move one division with its artillery in three to five days; the Madinah Armored Division, most of which is garrisoned on the rail line, could move simultaneously by

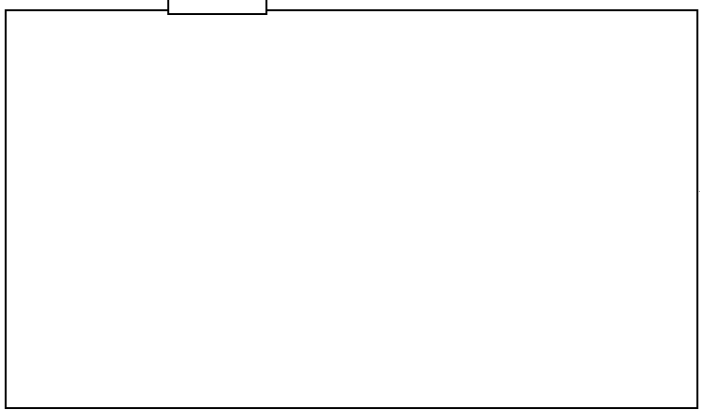
[5] This timeline assumes that Iraq uses its full HET and rail capability in a one-way move. If any more equipment or forces were to be moved, these transportation assets would have to be recycled, significantly slowing the deployment timeline for subsequent units. Other factors, such as fatigue and equipment failure, would increasingly impede movement.

rail in about five days, assuming rail authorities had sufficient advance notice to marshal rolling stock at the several loading sites.

Iraq would face many risks in trying to move its forces so quickly, as demonstrated by the breakdown of discipline during the withdrawal. Units straggled behind when HETs failed. Equipment was loaded on trains in disarray. Nearly three weeks after the start of the withdrawal, equipment was still sitting at a train station waiting to be moved to garrison. Moreover, a rapid deployment would include only essential combat elements with brigade-level supplies. The invading force would lack key divisional and corps logistic and fire-support assets, including engineer, maintenance, medical, artillery, and air defense.

Nevertheless, an offensive spearheaded by the maneuver elements of two Republican Guard armored divisions could cause considerable damage to Kuwait and could perhaps even overrun the country. In this scenario, Iraq's limited sustainment capabilities would not be a major detriment. In our judgment, however, such a scenario remains unlikely:

- The attacking force would rely on III Corps for rear area security, service support, and follow-on forces. This would be a severe strain on the regular Army, and reinforcement from other areas of Iraq would have to arrive quickly if Baghdad intended to hold its gains. Iraq probably would not be able to maintain the requisite flow of supplies and follow-on forces in the face of air interdiction by Coalition forces in the region today.
- Iraqi doctrine calls for a 3-to-1 advantage in a deliberate attack, and history shows their preference for using overwhelming force. Against Kuwait's four understrength brigades, plus possible GCC and Coalition forces, Iraq would probably want more than the combat elements of two reliable divisions, particularly if it expected to hold Kuwait.



A Deliberate Buildup Attack. In July, we anticipated that Iraq would plan to commit at least 10 to 15 divisions—including the full mix of support elements—in order to seize and hold Kuwait and at least another three divisions if it planned to extend the attack into Saudi Arabia. However, in line with Iraq's desire to minimize Western warning, we recognized that the attack on Kuwait could begin as soon as the initial assault force was assembled—probably a corps-sized force of as many as three armored and perhaps one infantry division from the Republican Guard, reinforced by one or two regular Army heavy divisions from the Al Basrah area. The remainder of the attacking force would be mobilized and deployed concurrent with the offensive, as was the case in 1990.

In our judgment, this type of deliberate build-up attack remains Saddam's preferred invasion option because a larger, better supported offensive would offer the best chance for rapidly seizing Kuwait and extending follow-on operations into Saudi Arabia. The time to prepare this force, with all assigned equipment and full divisional and corps combat and support assets, was estimated to be 18 days or more.

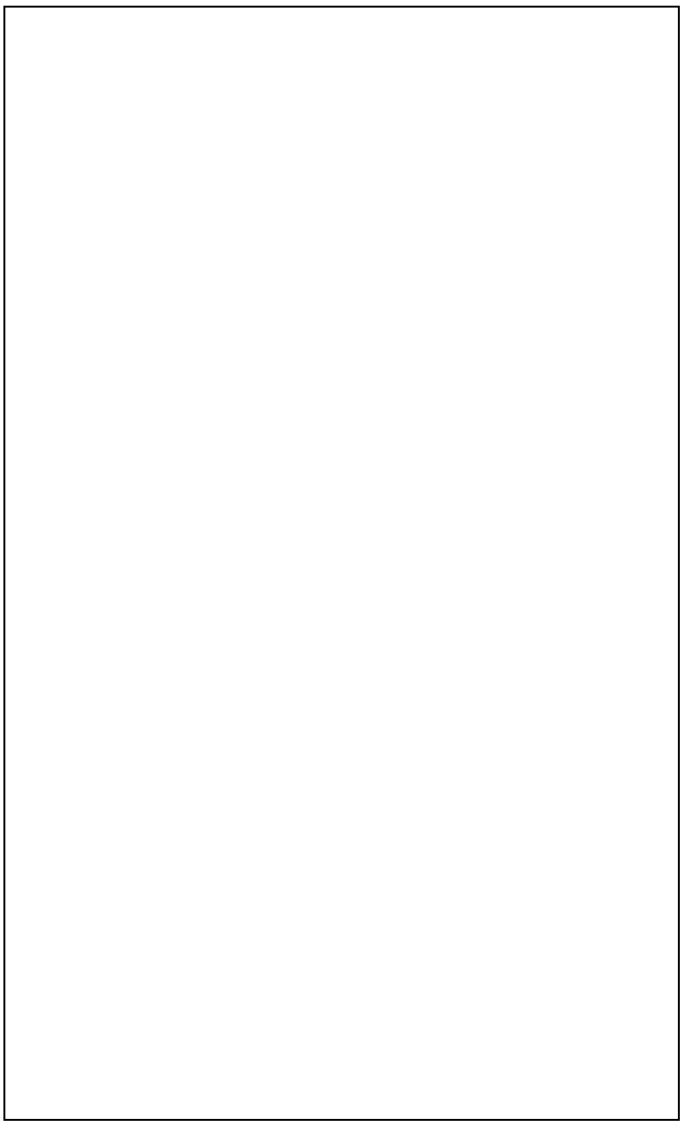
The recent massing of two Republican Guard forces at Az Zubayr does not provide enough evidence to significantly alter the NIE's assessments regarding movement times for an attack of three Republican Guard heavy divisions with full support. In fact, the October deployment is well within the movement timeline presented in the NIE.

As stated earlier, our analysis of October's events indicates that the major maneuver and some fire-support elements of both divisions would have completed their deployment to the Kuwaiti border in 12 days. If Iraq had deployed the additional combat and support elements that were included in the NIE timeline—but which never materialized during the October crisis—then the deployment time would have increased to 15 to 18 days or longer:

- It would have taken Iraq at least three additional days to move the other Republican Guard division—the Madinah Armored Division located near Baghdad—which would have required little or no HET support because of its proximity to rail yards. This assumes that some elements of the Madinah could have been moved during the first five days of October when the rail line was apparently used less; if not, then the deployment timeline would have been even longer.
- Iraq also would have needed at least another three days to move the full complement of divisional and corps combat and service support assets that we would expect to see prior to a major offensive.

Implications

Baghdad probably will pursue a more cooperative diplomatic policy in the near term in an effort to get relief from UN sanctions. However, because Saddam has not altered his fundamental goals, Iraq remains an immediate source of concern and a long-term threat to US strategic interests in the Persian Gulf. As the pressure on Saddam continues to mount, he is more likely to resort to confrontation. In this context, it is important to distinguish between perceptions of Saddam's intentions—about which we are always uncertain—and Iraqi capabilities.



Iraq still enjoys a huge military advantage over the forces of Kuwait and the GCC and retains a number of threatening military options. The October crisis demonstrated that Baghdad has the capability to quickly assemble a force which could do considerable damage to Kuwait and that Saddam retains his penchant for unpredictable, high-risk, confrontational tactics.

In our judgment, however, Saddam does not have the capability today to destroy or occupy the major Saudi oil facilities south of As Saffaniyah before the West could respond. Moreover, he is not likely to attempt another full-scale invasion of Kuwait; unless Iraq's military has been improved significantly, he is convinced that only token Western opposition will be mounted, and he is no longer preoccupied with maintaining internal security. In the wake of the October crisis, Saddam probably is even more certain of the US capability and will to protect its regional interests.